



Tom Lantos

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
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Burma Sanctions Should Be Renewed Until Human Rights Situation Appreciably Improves

Washington, DC – Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA) today introduced legislation to extend sanctions against the repressive regime of Burma that were imposed by Congress and the President last year.

“Unfortunately, the case for a tough approach toward Burma, including a comprehensive import ban, is even stronger now than when the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 was signed into law,” Lantos said. “Until Burma embarks on an irreversible path of reconciliation that includes the full and unfettered participation on the National League for Democracy and ethnic minorities, the United States must continue to deny Burma’s leaders the hard currency they so desperately crave.”

The Lantos legislation, a one-year extension of the import sanctions portion of the law that he co-authored last year, continues to prohibit the importation into the United States of any article produced in Burma. The President may waive these sanctions once of series of human rights, democracy and counter-narcotics requirements have been met. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) is introducing similar legislation in the Senate.

Amnesty International has reported that “there has been an upsurge in detention of those peacefully exercising freedom of expression and association” in Burma. Amnesty also has found that arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment of prisoners in Burma is routine, and that the country conducts trials that fall far short of international fair trial standards. And among other conclusions, the group has found that Burma forcibly relocates members of ethnic minorities.

The Burmese Government has called for a “national convention” to determine Burma’s future in early May, but it continues to keep the Nobel Peace Prize-winning activist Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest, and hundreds of other democracy and human rights leaders behind bars.

“The regime in Rangoon has brought world condemnation upon itself,” Lantos said. “Our allies in Europe and Asia must follow our tough approach and impose targeted import sanctions on Burma.”

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